



Chairman Lipps, Vice Chair Holmes, Ranking Member Russo, and Members of the House Health Committee, thank you sincerely for the opportunity to provide testimony on *House Bill 248* (HB-248).

My name is William Brinkman, MD, MEd, MSc, FAAP. I am a practicing primary care pediatrician at Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center. I am writing to voice my opposition to HB-248 which would prohibit any entity, including schools and childcare centers, from requiring or requesting any vaccine information. I feel strongly that this will have a negative impact on the health of communities throughout Ohio.

I have seen firsthand the negative impact of vaccine refusal on the health of individuals who refused and others with whom they interacted. Indeed, outbreaks of pertussis (or whooping cough) often start with adolescents who weren't immunized or didn't receive booster shots. When teens pass pertussis to babies less than one year old who haven't yet had the chance to get fully immunized, it causes severe disease. About half of babies with pertussis are hospitalized. Babies with pertussis can stop breathing. There are similar negative impacts from infections with other vaccine preventable diseases like measles, bacterial pneumonia, rotavirus diarrhea, and bacterial meningitis.

Vaccines are safe and effective. Aside from clean water, vaccines have made the greatest impact in reducing disease, death, and disability in Ohio, the US, and around the world. We cannot take this for granted. They protect individuals, but they also protect our neighbors who may not yet be able to protect themselves. Certainly, no parent wants their child to suffer. Nor do parents want to live with regret knowing they failed to protect their child from a preventable disease. Beyond our immediate families, we need to look out for our neighbors near and far throughout Ohio. As the pandemic has shown us, our collective health as a community depends on the health of all our neighbors.

Since this bill will dramatically reduce childhood vaccinations, we will likely experience regular outbreaks of potentially lethal yet preventable diseases. How is this outcome in the best interests of Ohioans?

Thank you for the opportunity to voice my opposition to this bill.

Sincerely,

William B. Brinkman, MD, MEd, MSc, FAAP